United Nations A/63/PV.1

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 16 September 2008
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the President of the General Assembly

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I declare open the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Statement by the President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Fortunately, communication goes beyond the spoken word and its limitations, especially in this twenty-first century, which has been called the age of the image. I would therefore like to begin my statement with a brief multimedia introduction, using the tools that technology has given us, and I invite members to watch a short video.

A video was displayed in the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): And now let us return to communicating in the more traditional form of words.

I come before the Assembly today fully aware of the complexity of the responsibility I assumed in accepting the presidency of this sixty-third session of the General Assembly, which you, the members, have so generously entrusted to me. Despite the relative insignificance to which the General Assembly has been relegated in recent years, I firmly believe that the task of presiding over this General Assembly is an important one.

It becomes even more significant when this post strives to transform the prevailing exclusionary logic of selfishness that has, at times, crippled the ability of this body to fulfil its mandate as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Left unchecked, this logic can only lead us to death and the extinction of our own species. The logic of selfishness must be replaced with the logic of love, of inclusiveness, of "we" and "our", of solidarity. The struggle for the full acceptance of the logic of solidarity in both our Organization and in its Member States will be the principal endeavour of this presidency.

The state of our world today is deplorable, inexcusable and therefore shameful. What Tolstoy denounced as "mad selfishness" explains why, as trillions of dollars are spent on wars of aggression, more than half the world's people languish in hunger

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and destitution. Our priorities, my dear brothers and sisters, could hardly be more confused.

All of us, without exception, share responsibility for the state of the world today. While some are undoubtedly more responsible than others, there is no point in arguing over our different degrees of responsibility. What is important at this point is that we look to the future, learning from our past mistakes, and together embark wholeheartedly on the task of building a new and better world, a resolute world, in the conviction that another world is possible.

The situation in which our world finds itself is even more serious today than it was 63 years ago when the United Nations was founded. Nevertheless, we are not fatally condemned to continue sinking into the morass of mad, suicidal selfishness in which we find ourselves.

In order to escape from that morass, we have only to recognize that we are all sisters and brothers and that the truth of that fact demands that we change our way of thinking, behaving and interacting with one another. At this point in the odyssey of human existence, that is the central truth. Our acceptance of that truth and of its logical consequences will determine whether coming generations will have a decent future.

Love prompts us to take action in the construction of a more just and non-violent world, with solidarity as its most important feature. We must do so without looking back and while seeking reconciliation with all those who might have caused us pain and suffering. If we cannot forgive, we will not be deserving of life. We will have opted for hate and rancour, which lead only to destruction and death.

In addition to the capacity to forgive, we must all once again think of ourselves as stewards of planet Earth. Little by little, we humans, especially those of us in the West, have rebelled against our vocation of stewardship, our reason for being. We have increasingly become arrogant landlords, believing that we have absolute rights over what has been entrusted to our care and management for the good of all.

That is the suicidal madness in which we find ourselves. Wake-up calls, whatever their form and no matter how brotherly their spirit, always make some people uncomfortable. However, in view of the dangerous excesses of human behaviour, these wake-up calls are imperative. The basic problem is one ethics. Simply stated, we are not treating each othe the natural world as we should.

My call for us to embrace the supreme law love, without exceptions or exclusions, for the sak present and future generations, is made on understanding that what gives meaning to hu existence is the never-ending process of more and m dedication to the service of our fellow beings an universal solidarity. In that process of transforma all religions and ethical-philosophical systems can should help us.

Although for me personally the paradigm life-giving and redemptive behaviour is in the Cro am convinced that all of us, in our respective religi cultural and ethical-philosophical traditions, fin strong summons to embrace the logic of love solidarity. We must all jointly endeavour to turn summons into the main propelling force for human and for the United Nations. Love for each other and our Earth should ground our interdependence and g our collective activity.

At this very difficult time for humankind, Organization has a major role to play and an obliga to prepare itself to perform better. The central overarching objective of the sixty-third session of General Assembly will be to democratize the Un Nations. In so doing, we will ensure that the Un Nations maintains its place as the world's m important and indispensable organization for achie the levels of peace and security that our peoples rightly demanding of us.

I am aware of the great expectations that the majority of the dispossessed inhabitants of threatened planet have placed in the United Nation bring them peace and security and to defend their r to life and full development. We must not fail them was most of all for the dispossessed of the world th took up the challenge of presiding over the sixty-t session of the General Assembly. It is to them — to our dispossessed sisters and brothers on Earth — th dedicate my presidency. We must unite our effo with all the seriousness that the task requires, to m their expectations. I trust that I can count on generous cooperation of all members. On behal Nicaragua and the entire Latin American Caribbean region, my extended homeland, I th members for their confidence.

I should now like to turn to the issues of hunger, poverty and high oil and food prices. Various large-scale crises — economic, financial, environmental, humanitarian and legal — are converging in the present world crisis in food prices. These crises are reflected in the current turbulence and distortion in credit markets, subsidized oil prices, the rise in world food prices and rising prices in general, and are aggravated even further by economic stagnation.

Each one of those crises interacts with the others, exponentially aggravating the deterioration in the world economy. As much as authorities and the media strive to minimize the gravity of the current situation, the truth is that we find ourselves before a global economic upheaval of unprecedented magnitude. As a result, today we are in serious danger of suffering setbacks in the fight against hunger and poverty, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce extreme poverty.

At the root of the problem of world hunger is the unequal distribution of purchasing power within and between countries. Rather than concentrating on increasing food production as the sole solution, the central focus of our efforts should be on reducing the inequalities in the world's food production system.

If we are to deal effectively with the problem of hunger, Governments will need to take the courageous decisions that the crisis requires of them, including reorienting their own national priorities, transcending local and national confines to take into account the greater good and the well-being of the world's poor.

We must demonstrate our readiness to tackle even the most sensitive and contentious of issues. That means addressing, for example, the market distortions caused by the agricultural subsidies of developed countries; the impact of speculation on futures markets; the impacts of climate change on food production and the environment; the multiple impacts of the production of biofuels; and last but not least, the problematic development model imposed on developing countries by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

If we are to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger from this Earth, the General Assembly, in addition to determining the real needs in terms of the types and amounts of international cooperation required, will have to meet the challenge of fostering strong feelings of solidarity in order to awaken the necessary political will among all our Member States.

During the sixty-third session, we will therefore examine the immediate and root causes of the world food crisis and its impact on world hunger and poverty. And for that reason, I welcome the declaration of the ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Tehran in late July 2008, calling for a meeting at the highest level to deal with the theme of food security and to identify immediate and medium-term actions to resolve that crisis.

It is also imperative that we deal with the root causes that limit the institutional capacity of our own General Assembly, such as, first, non-observance of the principles and standards laid down in the Charter; secondly, the growing tendency to deprive the General Assembly of any real power; thirdly, the reduction of the Economic and Social Council to a peripheral body; and fourthly, the transfer of ever more power to the Security Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as to other international finance and trade institutions in general.

In other words, it is precisely in the lack of democracy within our Organization where we find the most profound cause for the most serious problems in our world today.

On the democratization of the United Nations, without a doubt, a United Nations enriched by genuine input from all its Members would make our Organization the ideal forum for dealing effectively with the world's most pressing problems and for preventing a few from imposing upon the majority courses of action that only make matters worse. For that reason, we have concluded that it has become imperative to hold a high-level dialogue on the democratization of the United Nations. At the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, we will hold this dialogue in three five-day sessions.

The first session will concern the indispensable coordination of the Bretton Woods and other international financial and commercial institutions with the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

The Bretton Woods institutions were established for the very purpose of addressing the inequity of extreme poverty and helping to rebuild the world economy. But all too often they have been used to

impose ill-advised prescriptions that have only made the problem of poverty worse instead of helping to resolve it. While they are not United Nations bodies in the strictest sense, the Bretton Woods institutions are among the specialized agencies referred to in Articles 57 and 63 of the Charter, which are to be brought into relationship with the Organization on terms defined by agreement with the Economic and Social Council.

Both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are basically controlled by the United States and Europe. Both institutions have been and continue to be used as instruments of domination. The world resents this, and this situation must change. The necessary democratization of those international financial institutions requires a change in the system of shares and the system for electing the respective boards of directors.

The second session of this high-level dialogue of the General Assembly will be devoted to a discussion of the revitalization and empowerment of the Assembly itself through the transfer to this body of the power wrongly accumulated in the Security Council, the Bretton Woods institutions and even, believe it or not, in the bureaucracy of our Organization.

At the United Nations, the word "democracy" is becoming increasingly empty, with no real meaning or substance. Even with a majority as overwhelming as 184 votes to 4 against the 45-year-old United States embargo against Cuba — and we see such votes year after year — that patently unjust and universally repudiated embargo remains firmly in place. If the opinion of more than 95 per cent of the membership of the United Nations can be so casually ignored, of what use is this General Assembly? That is a question that deserves some thought. How can we be content to say that we have democracy simply because we have the "one nation, one vote" rule? What good are votes if they are ignored?

In any event, it is clear that we all must wholeheartedly embrace the universal call for a strengthened and empowered General Assembly, which can only be achieved through the democratization of the United Nations. We know that fighting the powers that be has never been easy, but we also know that the future of the United Nations will depend on our success in the struggle for its democratization — that is, on our capacity to persuade some of the powerful to free themselves of their unbridled ambition for more and more power, at the expense of the rights of the majority.

We will continue to stress that the democratization that the United Nations so urgently needs will entail decentralizing the power accumulated in a small group of States and in the Organization's own bureaucracy and transferring that power to the General Assembly, where it logically belongs. That is an urgent task: the world cannot afford to wait another 15 years listening to speeches that lead nowhere. It is time, brothers and sisters, to act.

It is all well and good to preach democracy, but it would be better still for us to put it into practice, right here at the United Nations. It makes no sense to wage wars of aggression that kill hundreds of thousands of people with the purported aim of supporting democracy, while at the same time using every imaginable means and pretext to prevent the democratization of the United Nations itself.

In addition, the General Assembly should become more proactive, and its resolutions should be binding. The idea that the clear and unequivocal voice of "We the peoples" should be regarded as a mere recommendation with no binding power should be buried forever in our anti-democratic past.

The third and final session of the high-level dialogue on the democratization of the United Nations will be devoted to a frank discussion of the Security Council.

Many areas of the United Nations system are in urgent need of attention, and chief among them is the Security Council. It is a sad but undeniable fact that serious breaches of and threats to international peace and security are being perpetrated by some members of the Security Council that are unable to break what appears to be their addiction to war.

In the case of some of those members, the veto privilege seems to have gone to their heads and confused them to the point of making them think that they are entitled to do as they please without consequence. The first principle of the United Nations, the one upon which our Organization is based, is the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members. The second principle is that all Members — all Members — shall fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter. In other words, any attempt by a Member State

to put itself above the Charter is a serious offence against the membership and constitutes a threat to peace. Guaranteeing respect for those principles can no longer be postponed.

As difficult as that may be, solving the problem of the Security Council is a challenge we have to take up. I am well aware that by saying this I am stirring up a hornets' nest, but even hornets can be managed successfully if due precautions are taken. I propose that, at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, we seriously consider what those precautions should be.

We hope that today, after all that has happened in the world since the United Nations was founded, our most powerful sister nations will be willing to give peace and democracy a chance. In any event, it should be borne in mind that privileges granted by law on the assumption that they are reasonable and for the common good remain valid only as long as that assumption holds true.

I think we all agree that merely increasing the number of members or of countries with the privileges of permanent membership or the power of veto in the Security Council would in no way address the core issue. While it is necessary to ensure fairer and more geographically balanced representation, increasing the number of Security Council members would do nothing to correct the anomalies that we should be trying to rectify.

In addition to the themes of hunger, poverty and high oil and food prices and the high-level dialogue on the democratization of the United Nations, to be held in three sessions as I have just explained, at the sixty-third session the General Assembly will devote special attention to the following major themes which, for the sake of brevity, I shall now simply outline. I invite all members, however, to review the full text of my presentation, which is now available in all the working languages of the Organization. Each theme is closely related to the lack of democracy at the United Nations and is considered to be of the utmost urgency.

Today, there is scientific consensus on the human origins of climate change, especially following last year's publication of the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The report concludes and asserts that global warming is unequivocal and that tangible solutions are needed to address it. The adoption of the Bali Action Plan constitutes an important step in that direction.

It is imperative that the value of tropical forests as important carbon sinks be recognized and that the countries historically responsible for climate change pay fair incentives for their conservation. We must not forget that deforestation, which causes 20 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, is largely a consequence of the extreme poverty of small farmers in developing countries.

Water is not a commodity to be bought and sold. It is a fundamental right that must be recognized as one of the goals of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life". The World Bank reports that, by 2025, two thirds of the world's population will not have enough clean water. We need to join forces and resources to take immediate steps to protect the sources of that precious resource, improve measures to prevent water pollution and alert peoples to the impending crisis, which threatens the lives and well-being of hundreds of millions, if not billions, of human beings.

With respect to terrorism and human rights, no State should appropriate the right to decide on its own which States are terrorists or sponsors of terrorism and which are not. Less still should States that are guilty of wars of aggression — the worst form of terrorism imaginable — presume to arrogate that right to themselves and take any unilateral action they may deem appropriate.

For that reason, we insist that it is time for the General Assembly to embark, with all due seriousness, on a discussion of international terrorism, including its definition and the assignment of responsibilities for dealing with it. That is a task, my dear sisters and brothers, that cannot wait.

General and complete disarmament is one of the fundamental objectives of the United Nations. Yet, that urgent issue has been pushed into the background and has not received the kind of follow-up it deserves. The mere presence of 4,600 nuclear warheads on high alert poses intolerable risks to international security, since accidental launches can always occur. Each year this body adopts over 50 resolutions and decisions on those issues. Yet, something is missing from our deliberations — the effective implementation of our decisions by constructive action.

This presidency will call upon all Member States at the sixty-third session to adopt a results-based approach both to disarmament and to the regulation of conventional armaments. Progress in that important area, as in all others, must be measured by deeds and not only by words or numbers of resolutions.

Human trafficking, the situation of Palestine, humanitarian assistance and gender equality are other issues to which we will give special and priority attention. Similarly, in considering the various aforementioned themes, we should devote special attention to the most vulnerable, including most especially children in situations of armed conflict or humanitarian disaster. Our efforts in that area must not be limited to the provision of shelter, clothing and food, but rather focus special attention on their right to education.

In conclusion, today more than ever before, candour is indispensable in international relations. I would like this sixty-third session of the General Assembly to go down in history as the "Assembly of candour" for the sake of world peace and the eradication of poverty and hunger from the Earth. Considering the seriousness of the global crises, diffident and ambiguous language will get us nowhere. The United Nations can effectively tackle the deep-rooted and urgent problems of the day only by doing so clearly, firmly and unequivocally. Sugar-coating, speaking euphemistically or engaging in petty semantics so as not to call things by their name, all on the basis of an erroneous concept of diplomacy, has never worked and will never work. The world crisis is too serious to allow for euphemisms or half measures.

Change — real, credible change — is the watchword of the day. Even more than political will, we will need to summon great spiritual strength to carry out the changes needed to democratize the United Nations. That, in turn, will strengthen the Organization's capacity to contribute with growing effectiveness to the supreme cause of peace in our world. However, knowing that we are in need of great spiritual strength must not discourage us — it is within our reach.

All persons and nations without exception possess enormous reserves of human nobility. It is time for us to tap into the reserves of moral strength within each of us as individuals and within all of us as nations. If we do so, our hearts and our capacity to love and serve will grow and we will find ourselves better able to bring our great human family to new levels of solidarity that guarantee to all of us, and to generations to come, a future of enduring peace.

Let us put to rest forever the unhealthy aspiration of dominance of one over the other. Let us free ourselves, too, from our addiction to war and violence in general. Imperial dreams and behaviour are incompatible with the principles to which we have all committed ourselves within the Charter and with the ideal of a world at peace in international security. Let us work together now to make a truly United Nations — united, fraternal and joined in solidarity. Now is the time for all of us to begin the process of turning weapons into ploughshares to feed a world languishing in hunger and poverty.

Let Gandhi be for us not only someone to whom we render tribute in speeches and declarations but, more importantly, a paradigm that we try to emulate. Let us honour his global legacy by putting the greater good of our shared humanity at the forefront of our collective endeavour to build a world community at peace with itself and in harmony with Mother Earth, our vast shared home.

Let us give genuine democracy and peace a chance. Let us conduct ourselves as the people we are — all sisters and brothers, reconciled with one another and committed to living in non-violence and solidarity. A democratized United Nations will be the indispensable tool for achieving those lofty goals.

I should like to end as we began. On this occasion, I invite representatives to hear a song. I believe it is an appropriate way to end my opening statement.

The members of the General Assembly heard a musical performance.

Item 125 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/63/350)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Next, I would like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/63/350. It contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that seven Member States are in arrears in the payment of

their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in document A/63/350?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the sixty-third session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly, at the beginning of each session, shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that for the sixty-third session the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Botswana, China, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mozambique, the Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis and the United States of America.

May I take it that the States I have mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Letters dated 8 and 15 September 2008 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/63/352 and A/63/352/Add.1)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members are aware that, pursuant to section 1, paragraph 7, of resolution 40/243, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during the main part of a regular session of the Assembly, unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

On the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, authorization is thus sought for the following subsidiary organs: the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Disarmament Commission, the Independent Audit Advisory Committee, the Executive Board of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund and the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize those subsidiary organs of the Assembly to meet during the main part of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.2

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Friday, 19 September 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

First report of the General Committee (A/63/250)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I invite the General Assembly to direct its attention to section I of the report of the General Committee. In that section, the Committee took note of the information contained in paragraph 2.

May I request the General Assembly now to direct its attention to section II, entitled "Organization of the session", which contains a number of recommendations concerning the General Committee, rationalization of work, the opening and closing dates for the session, the schedule of meetings, the general debate, the conduct of meetings, et cetera. In paragraph 16, the General Committee recommends that the general debate be held from Tuesday, 23 September to Saturday 27 September and on Monday, 29 September 2008.

In connection with the recommendations of the General Committee on the general debate, I would like to give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Shaaban (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): I wish to inform members that, in connection with the recommendation of the General Committee that the General Assembly hold the general debate on Saturday, 27 September 2008, I should like to put on record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

The holding of the general debate of the General Assembly on Saturday 27 September 2008 had not been planned, though regular meetings servicing requirements for the general debate during weekdays have been provided for within the official calendar of conferences. Therefore, meeting on a Saturday implies overtime compensation for meetings servicing and other related staff. Accordingly, resources related to overtime for meeting servicing staff would be required.

In addition, other related staff from the Office of the Central Support Services, the Department of Safety and Security and the Department of Public Information would be required to provide sound engineering, safety and security, press coverage, webcasting, and radio and television services, broken down as follows: section 2 — General Assembly affairs and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management: $58,400; section 27 — Public information: $25,100; section 28 D — Office of Central Support Services: $5,000; and section 33 — Safety and security: $10,000; for a total of $98,500.

No provisions have been made under the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 for servicing the general debate of the General Assembly on a Saturday. Should the plan to hold the general debate of the General Assembly on Saturday,

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27 September 2008 be adopted, indicative additional conference servicing and other requirements of $98,500 would arise. All efforts will be made to meet the requirements within the provisions under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; section 27, Public information; section 28 D, Office of Central Support Services; and section 33, Safety and security, of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): Japan has no problem with having a general debate on a Saturday. However, we have difficulty accepting the financial implications just mentioned by the representative of the Secretariat. It is our understanding that, if the debate were to take place on Saturday, the cost would be absorbed by currently existing financial resources. Therefore, we cannot join the consensus of having the general debate on Saturday without clearance of the budgetary implications.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Shaaban (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): The statement read out on behalf of the Secretary-General, as I explained, was in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. According to that rule, I am required to brief the General Assembly on the figures I indicated for a total of $98,500. At the same time, on behalf of the Secretary-General, I said that all efforts will be made to meet the requirements within the provisions of the available budget under the relevant sections. Thus, my statement did not mean that those would be extra expenses.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): I am sorry to take the floor again. I thank the representative of the Secretariat for the clarification. In the understanding that there will be no further budgetary implications, we can join the consensus on holding the general debate on Saturday, 27 September.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Secretariat. May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation of the General Committee that the general debate be held from Tuesday, 23 September to Saturday, 27 Septem 2008 and on Monday, 29 September 2008?

It is so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): All o recommendations in section II of the memorandun the Secretary-General concern established practice rather than going through them one by one, I believ would be better and much more efficient that address all organizational matters concerning General Assembly as a whole. If there are comments on that approach, we shall proc accordingly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Gen Assembly to take note of all of the information th is requested to take note of and to approve all recommendations of the General Committee contai in section II of the report?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Having adopted the recommendation in paragraph 15 waiving the requirements of rule 67 of the rule procedure of the General Assembly to declar meeting open, I would like to endorse the pract suggestion that has been made at previous sessi that each delegation designate someone to be prese the meeting rooms at the scheduled time.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Gen Assembly to take note of the information containe paragraph 36, concerning the timely submission draft proposals for the review of their progran budget implications?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now in Members to turn their attention to section III dea with the adoption of the agenda. The question allocation of items will be dealt with subsequentl section IV.

In section III, the General Committee took of the information contained in paragraphs 44 to 49

In paragraph 50, the General Assembly informed that the General Committee decided postpone to a later date its consideration of question of the inclusion of item 19 of the agenda, "Question of the Comorian island of Mayot

With respect to paragraph 51, the General Committee recommended not to include item 28 of the draft agenda, "Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the aerial and naval military attack against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the present United States Administration in April 1986". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 52, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 40 of the draft agenda, "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", be deferred to the sixty-fourth session and that the item be included in the provisional agenda of that session. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 53, in connection with sub-item (e) of item 58 of the draft agenda, "Social development: Review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action concerning disabled persons", the General Committee recommends that sub-item (e) of item 58 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading B, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 54, in connection with sub-item (k) of item 107 of the draft agenda, "Appointment of the judges of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal", the General Committee recommends that sub-item (k) of item 107 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 55, in connection with sub-item (l) of item 107 of the draft agenda, "Appointment of the judges of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal", the General Committee recommends that sub-item (l) of item 107 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 56, in connection with item 153 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the South Centre in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends that item 153 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 57, in connection with item 154 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends that item 154 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 58, the General Assembly is informed that the General Committee decided to postpone to a later date its consideration of the question of the inclusion of item 155 of the draft agenda, "Natural resources and conflicts".

In paragraph 59, the General Assembly is also informed that the General Committee decided to postpone to a later date during this calendar year its consideration of the question of the inclusion of item 156 of the draft agenda, "Commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine (Holodomor)".

With respect to paragraph 60, the General Committee recommended not to include item 157 of the draft agenda, "Need to examine the fundamental rights of the 23 million people of the Republic of China (Taiwan) to participate meaningfully in the activities of the United Nations specialized agencies". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 61, the General Committee recommends that item 158 of the draft agenda, "Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on whether the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo is in accordance with international law", be included in the agenda of the current session under heading F, "Promotion of justice and international law".

I call on the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Willson (United States of America): The United States would like to underline its support for the International Court of Justice and emphasize that we recognize the importance that seeking an advisory opinion from the Court can have in appropriate cases.

The United States also maintains its general support for a policy of liberal inscription of items on the agenda of the General Assembly. In the light of that policy, we have chosen not to oppose the inscription of Serbia's request for the General Assembly to consider the question of referring Kosovo's independence to the International Court of Justice.

Nevertheless, we have serious reservations about the appropriateness of the General Assembly considering that issue. We did not join the consensus in the General Committee, and for that reason, in joining consensus on the adoption of the other paragraphs of the General Committee's report, the United States will dissociate itself from the decisions relating to this item.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 62, the General Assembly is informed that the General Committee decided to postpone to a later date its consideration of the question of the inclusion of item 159 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in the General Assembly".

In paragraph 63, in connection with item 160 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the University for Peace in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends that item 160 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matter May I take it that the General Assembly approves t recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn n to the agenda which the General Committ recommends in paragraph 64 of its report for adopti by the General Assembly, taking into account t decisions just adopted with respect to the draft agend

Bearing in mind that the agenda is organiz under nine headings, we shall consider the inclusion items under each heading as a whole. I should like remind members once again that, at present, we are n discussing the substance of any item.

Items 1 to 3 have already been dealt with. W turn now to items 4 to 8. May I take it that these ite are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn n to the inclusion of the items listed under heading "Maintenance of international peace and security May I take it that the items listed under heading A a included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We come n to heading B, "Promotion of sustained econon growth and sustainable development in accordan with the relevant resolutions of the General Assemb and recent United Nations conferences". May I take that the items listed under this heading are included the agenda?

It is so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Next, we tu to heading C, "Development of Africa". May I take that the item listed under this heading is included in t agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Now we co to heading D, "Promotion of human rights". May I ta it that the items listed under heading D are included the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Heading E entitled "Effective coordination of humanitari

assistance efforts". May I take it that the item listed under this heading is included in the agenda?

It is so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Next, we turn to heading F, "Promotion of justice and international law". May I take it that the items listed under heading F are included in the agenda?

It is so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Now we turn to heading G, "Disarmament". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Heading H is entitled "Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It is so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Lastly, we turn to heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the items listed under heading I are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to section IV of the report of the General Committee, on allocation of items.

The General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 65 to 68. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 67, concerning the granting of observer status?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 69 to 75. We shall take up the recommendations one by one.

Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers cited here refer to the agenda in paragraph 64 of the report before us, namely document A/63/250.

We turn first to paragraphs 69 (a) to (h), relating to a number of items to be considered in plenary meeting. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that the General Committee wishes it to take note of and to approve all the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 69 (a) to (h)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We now turn to paragraph 70 relating to item 89, "General and complete disarmament". May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 70?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to paragraph 71, on item 48 of the Second Committee. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 71?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to paragraphs 72 (a) and (b), on items 56 and 64 of the Third Committee, respectively. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve the recommendations and to take note of the information contained in paragraphs 72 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to paragraphs 73 (a) and (b), relating to items 119 and 129 of the Fifth Committee, respectively. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 73 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to paragraphs 74 (a) to (c), on items 151, 152 and 153 of the Sixth Committee, respectively. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 74 (a) to (c)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to paragraph 75, relating to item 58, "Report of the Human Rights Council". The General Committee decided to defer consideration of the allocation of that item to a later date.

We shall now turn to paragraph 76 of the report of the General Committee, on the allocation of items to the plenary and to each Committee.

I turn first to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed for plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We come next to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the First Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We come now to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Next, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Lastly, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Sixth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation.

Each Main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure.

I would now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the Holy See, in its capacity as an Observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/314 of 1 July 2004 and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/58/871, the Holy See, in its capacity as an Observer State, will participate in the work of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

I would also like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of Palestine, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 43/177 of 15 December 1988, and 52/250 of 7 July 1988, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002, Palestine, in its capacity as observer, will participate in the work of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.3

General Assembly
Sixty-third session

Official Records

3rd plenary meeting
Monday, 22 September 2008, 9 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m.

High-level plenary meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward"

Agenda item 57

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/130)

Draft resolution (A/63/L.1)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly, pursuant to resolutions 61/229 of 22 December 2006 and 62/242 of 4 March 2008, will convene under sub-item (a) of agenda item 57, a high-level meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward".

Statement by the President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a privilege for me to welcome participants to this first substantive meeting of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. I am particularly pleased that we are beginning our collective work with an issue as urgent as Africa's development needs, the status of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward.

At the Millennium Summit we decided to devote special attention to Africa's development needs because, to a great extent, throughout history the African continent has endured sacrifice, plunder, slaughter and, finally, oblivion. Considering the irreparable injustices of history and the inherent ravages of colonization, in September 2000 we made a collective commitment to our African sisters and brothers.

Almost a decade later, it is time to assess the progress made towards the goals we set in the Millennium Declaration. In that regard, Africa has undeniably made considerable democratic advances with the holding of elections and the establishment of elected Governments all across that fair continent.

I would especially like to welcome the establishment of the African Union in 2000 and the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which were undoubtedly milestones in Africa's history and in the empowerment of its own political, economic and social development process.

Without listing Africa's many achievements in good governance, which are described in detail in the Secretary-General's report (A/63/130), I would like to highlight the African Peer Review Mechanism, a self-monitoring instrument in which African leaders are reviewed by their peers on all aspects of good governance, human rights, macroeconomic policies and so forth.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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I also want to stress that Africa, in addition to ratifying the United Nations Convention against Corruption, has adopted the African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption, which has now been ratified by all African Union members.

Africa has amply fulfilled its own political, economic and social commitments. However, if it is to consolidate the progress made and reach our goal of empowering Africa to meet the development challenges it faces, the international community, especially donor countries and the Bretton Woods institutions, must fully honour their commitments and substantially complement the efforts of the African nations.

Africa's challenges are indeed still enormous. Brave as its nations may be — and we know that they are — Africa cannot move ahead on its own. The African countries' gains in terms of economic growth are real, but they must be decisively strengthened through concrete actions, such as the provision of more substantial external debt relief. The relative progress made in that area cannot obscure the unfair conditionalities that the Bretton Woods institutions and creditor countries continue to impose. Those conditionalities have the perverse effect not only of preventing the effective implementation of poverty reduction programmes, but also of eroding the living conditions of tens of millions of people, driving them deeper into the poverty from which those institutions were supposed to save them.

Africa's integration into the global economy also requires that it be guaranteed access to the international market. Beyond modest aid-for-trade efforts, the key to providing full access to trade lies in eliminating the developed countries' practice of subsidizing their industries, and especially their agricultural producers.

The failure of the Doha trade talks clearly illustrates the limits of that free-market doctrine, to which a few players have subjected the rest of the world. Those same proponents of extreme liberalism change their tune at the first sign that their economic might could be at risk and that their citizens could suffer the pain they inflict on others.

I therefore once again call for us to work together in fraternal solidarity to eliminate the market distortions generated by the subsidies of developed countries, as these have played a key role in worsening the global food crisis we are experiencing. We must join forces to eliminate those and other structural factors that are endangering the lives of millions of people.

Of course, that crisis has had a terrible impact on African populations and has extinguished what little hope there was of halving by 2015 the proportion of people on the African continent suffering from hunger. In that connection, it is imperative to transfer the necessary technology to give African countries new instruments to guarantee food for life, food security and food sovereignty. Such transfers are equally urgent for ensuring that the African countries' adaptation to the devastating consequences of climate change is not just a hope but a reality.

I would also like to recall that the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility is a cornerstone of the international commitments concerning sustainable development. That principle places developed countries under a moral and legal obligation to honour their many sustainable development commitments, including those relating to the transfer of technology. From an ethical standpoint, that need is all the more pressing in that it is completely at odds with the massive and astonishing wealth that multinational extractive industries generate from African land, flesh and blood, without producing diversified foreign direct investment in return for that wealth and at times the pillaging of those assets.

Helping Africa to boost its capacity to combat infectious diseases, I am certain, must begin with measures to give the entire population access to clean drinking water. Water purification and universal access would curb the spread of many diseases and reduce the number of children and women who die each day for lack of clean water.

Given that there are nearly 25 million people living with AIDS in Africa, saying that Africa has made progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS is cold comfort, but it should nonetheless encourage us to continue to mobilize international efforts to step up prevention initiatives and extend universal access to antiretroviral treatment throughout Africa. Preventing Africa's decimation by the AIDS pandemic is not only a sine qua non for its future development; it is also a moral obligation that all humankind has towards Africa.

In the light of the comments I have just made, I would like to recall that the commitments in the area of

financing for development entered into in the sisterly city of Monterrey, especially those pertaining to official development assistance, are still in force and are undeniably urgent. I therefore call upon the world's rich countries to redouble their efforts to bring official development assistance — which dropped from 0.33 per cent of gross domestic product in 2005 to 0.28 per cent in 2007 — closer to the Monterrey commitment of 0.7 per cent. I wish to remind members that the goal was first proposed by the Assembly itself in 1970. In the same vein, given the current levels of disbursement, I ask the members of the Group of Eight, with all the force of my position as President of the General Assembly, to deliver on the pledge they made at Gleneagles in 2005 to double official development assistance for Africa by 2010.

The cry of Africa's peoples, who yearn not only to survive but to live lives of dignity in decent conditions, does not require that we make new commitments, but only that we simply have the courage to live up to the words we have spoken many times over at the Rio, Copenhagen, Beijing, Cairo, New York and Monterrey summits. It is time to move from promises to concrete action. What we are witnessing is a state of emergency. Let us answer this challenge with the steadfastness and courage that the African peoples are asking of us.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I am grateful to the many heads of State or Government and other high-level representatives for attending this very historic meeting. The event is important in itself, but it is also critical to our preparations for the high-level meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be held on Thursday and the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development, which will start in Qatar in late November.

No one is more alarmed than the members of the General Assembly at the current trends, which indicate that no African country will achieve all the Goals by 2015. But I am convinced that, through concerted action by African Governments and their development partners, the MDGs remain achievable in Africa. That is one of my highest priorities as Secretary-General. I convened the MDG Africa Steering Group in 2007 to galvanize international support, bringing together eight of the main multilateral institutions working on development with Africa.

Through the work of the Steering Group and other efforts, we now have a good idea of what is needed. It will cost about $72 billion per year in external financing to achieve the Goals by 2015. That price tag may look daunting. But it is affordable and falls within existing aid commitments. Just consider the fact that member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) spent an estimated $267 billion last year on agricultural subsidies alone.

In this context, the cost of solving the food crisis, addressing global warming and pulling millions out of extreme poverty in Africa looks like good value. I appeal to all donors to implement the 2005 Gleneagles summit pledge to more than double aid to Africa.

We need to provide insecticide-treated bednets. We must improve maternal health, the slowest-moving of the MDGs. We must make sure every child has access to free primary education.

I also urge all Member States to agree on clear steps to follow up on the outcome of this high-level event.

(spoke in French)

Increasingly volatile weather conditions are taking their toll on African agriculture. Ethiopia is a case in point. The country is currently facing a severe drought in its south-eastern regions and severe flooding in its south-western regions. That implies that the effects of climate change are already with us. It is sadly ironic that the poor — who contribute the least to global warming — suffer most from its ill effects. Climate change is also leading to competition and conflict over natural resources. Many of these conflicts are local for the moment, but if unchecked, they could spin out of control.

Tackling these challenges is not just a moral imperative. The recent spate of conflicts over food and natural resources shows that our security depends on building prosperity in the developing world. Peace, development and respect for basic human rights go hand in hand. As we seek to build roads, bridges and schools, we also work to prevent war and build peace.

We are exploring new ways to stabilize fragile peace processes in Burundi, the Democratic Republic

of the Congo and the Sudan. The Peacebuilding Commission has provided support for Sierra Leone, Burundi and Liberia. Development can now progress in those countries, where only recently prospects were indeed dim.

(*spoke in English*)

Achieving peace and building trust require patience and perseverance. Let me pay tribute to the people of Zimbabwe for negotiating a Government of national unity. Similar perseverance is needed to resolve other crises, such as those in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia.

Crucially, the United Nations is strengthening and deepening cooperation with the African Union in peace and security, mediation and conflict prevention. The joint African Union-United Nations Panel on Peacekeeping has started exploring how the international community can support peace operations in Africa. We welcome the ongoing efforts to establish an African standby force.

But at the same time, multiple challenges continue to take a terrible toll: the impact of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis; the millions of school-age children deprived of basic education; the widespread violence against women; and the suffering of innocent people in Darfur and Somalia. Extreme poverty is still causing needless deaths and stopping millions of promising young Africans from fulfilling their potential.

We have before us several reports indicating that Africa's progress is not on track. We also have several reports telling us what needs to be done for Africa to change its course. Let this be the day when we begin implementing those recommendations in earnest. Let us leave this Hall with a strengthened commitment to change the course of history and bring hope and development to Africa and the entire world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Members will recall that in operative paragraph 4 of resolution 62/242 of 4 March 2008, the Assembly requested the President of the General Assembly to finalize the organizational arrangements for the meeting.

Address by Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairman of the African Union

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairman of the African Union.

President Kikwete: I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for conceiving the idea of holding this high-level meeting devoted to discussing Africa's development needs. I also congratulate the Secretary-General on his report on Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward (A/63/130).

Africa deserves this kind of attention because it is the poorest of the five continents. With respect to human development indicators, Africa scores the lowest on almost all of them. The Secretary-General's report quite extensively and competently covers Africa's needs and challenges for development. Certainly, numerous studies, publications and multilateral conferences have elucidated and arrived at a consensus as to what constitutes Africa's development, what impedes it and what needs to be done about it. The list of Africa's development needs is long, from provision of basic social and economic services to ensuring food security and increasing people's incomes through transformation of the productive sectors.

The Secretary-General effectively reminds us in his report that one critical thing that is preventing Africa's development needs from being met is a lack of the requisite resources. Development requires huge amounts of resources. Unfortunately, because of its lower level of development, Africa does not have sufficient resources to pull itself out of the poverty trap. The Secretary-General's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Africa Steering Group has, among other things, quantified development assistance needs with a view to meeting the MDGs, which forms the backbone of Africa's development challenges.

One good thing about those facts is that all of us in the international community and on the continent recognize Africa's acute resource constraints. We also know that African Governments have been taking measures to tackle the development challenges using

the few resources available to them. Another good thing is the fact that the international community has been generous enough to assist African nations with resources to complement their efforts. Unfortunately, the resources being committed and made available are not sufficient to lift Africa out of the poverty trap quickly. One unfortunate thing is the fact that many of the resources promised by the developed countries are not being provided.

I would like to take this opportunity to express Africa's disappointment at the failure of the developed nations to honour their commitments to provide resources to deal with the challenges of Africa's development. Allow me to use this forum today to call for a new impetus in meeting those commitments. It is the historic duty and a moral obligation of the developed nations to help the needy in Africa; it is not a question of charity.

As we meet here today, it is important to recall the Monterrey Consensus, adopted by heads of State and Government in March 2002. The Consensus provided a key framework for the financing of development. We in Africa saw the adoption of the Consensus as an important step in scaling up efforts to mobilize domestic and external resources for our development and that of other needy developing nations on this planet.

It is only prudent that, as we elevate Africa's development agenda as a matter of global concern, we take stock of where we are in the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and other decisions taken and commitments made in various forums. I am delighted to note the efforts of the Secretariat and the General Assembly in that respect, particularly through the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development that took place here in New York in October 2007 and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, which will take place in Doha later this year.

We in Africa are appreciative of the various efforts made in recent years to address the challenges of financing Africa's development needs. Those efforts are reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the communiqué adopted at the 2005 Gleneagles summit of the Group of Eight (G8). We are also thankful to the G8 countries for paying increasing attention to the development issues affecting Africa.

However, while all those efforts have provided additional momentum for the implementation of the commitments made by world leaders in the Monterrey Consensus, we in Africa are increasingly concerned at the persistent gap between what has been promised and what has been delivered. Collectively, the G8 is badly off track to fulfil its development assistance promises to Africa. I am told that, in total, G8 assistance to sub-Saharan Africa has increased by only $2.3 billion since 2004, whereas it should have increased by $5.4 billion during that period. If current trends continue, African countries will not be able to mobilize the resources required to finance the public investments critical to achieving the MDGs. Now is the time for the friends of Africa in the developed world to walk the walk. If they do not do so now, it may be too late as far as meeting the 2015 targets is concerned.

The amount of aid provided is as important as the quality of that aid. While we appreciate the fact that some of the developed countries have stepped up their efforts to meet their commitments, one concern for us in Africa is that most of the recent decrease in aid is due to debt relief and humanitarian assistance, and so does not reflect additional resources available to finance development programmes. Indeed, when those two components of aid are removed, it is clear that there has not been any significant change in real aid flows since 2004. Therefore, if donors are to meet their pledges to double aid flows to Africa by 2010, there has to be a significant scaling-up of aid this year, next year and the year after that.

Before I conclude, I would like to underscore the fact that Africa is not a hopeless case. We are not desperate, nor have we resigned ourselves to a state of helplessness. We are determined to wrestle ourselves out of our predicament. All we are saying is that we need the support of the developed members of the international community to complement our efforts. We thank our development partners for the invaluable support extended to us over many years, but much more needs to be done. That is all we are asking. It can be done; let us all play our part.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairperson of the African Union for the statement he has just made.

Address by Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the French Republic and President of the Council of the European Union

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the French Republic and President of the Council of the European Union.

President Sarkozy (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for the very comprehensive report that he has prepared on Africa's development needs (A/63/130).

Africa is on the move once again. The continent has found its way back to the path of growth. Since 1994, its average annual growth has been nearly 5 per cent. It is still accelerating today and should be more than 6 per cent in 2008. Happily, the volume of external investment has just exceeded that of official development assistance (ODA). The perception of Africa is changing.

However, that economic growth remains very abstract for a majority of Africans. A statistical reality, it is not yet an everyday reality for Africa's populations. Indeed, the African continent faces many challenges, including the food crisis and the effects of climate change. Above all, there is the assessment made in the Secretary-General's report — an assessment that should challenge all of us — that not one African country — not one — is on track to meet all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Europe wants to be involved alongside Africa. Recently, the 27 States members of the European Union (EU) collectively reaffirmed their very clear commitments with regard to aid. We confirmed the EU's objective of devoting 0.7 per cent of its wealth to ODA by 2015. That is a true action agenda that has been established and that we will discuss on 25 September at the special High-level Event on the MDGs proposed by the Secretary-General. We would like to go even further in the case of the global partnership for agriculture and food.

But let this be quite clear: The aid that Europe has agreed on for Africa is not simply from the heart; it is entirely rational, because we Europeans know that development assistance to Africa is first and foremost an investment in our common future. The globalized world needs a developed Africa. The European Union, a direct neighbour of the continent of Africa, needs a developed Africa.

What would be the use of working towards security and stability for Europe without at the same time seeking to bridge the existing development gap between Europe and Africa? It would be a delusion to envisage Europe's prosperity without working at the same time for the emergence of a major economic partner, located 14 kilometres from the European coast, whose population in 2030 will be greater than that of India or China. It is a delusion to seek world food security without making the most of Africa's agricultural resources so that it can feed itself, first and foremostt, but also help to feed the world.

That is why we will continue to work to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. There are still over 70 million children who must be sent to school in Africa; 900 million people in Africa suffer from under-nutrition and malnutrition; 23 million in Africa are living with AIDS; and every five minutes, 10 African children die of malaria. That is why education and health will remain at the very centre of our strategies for African aid.

We must, however, be clear about something else. Meeting the Millennium Development Goals is essential, but it is not enough to have a lasting impact on poverty, ensure growth in Africa and create jobs. We must help Africa to transform its agriculture, particularly its family agriculture. Africa needs not one but two Green Revolutions — one to increase yields and one to protect the environment.

Private initiative must be unleashed in Africa. Businesses, in particular small and medium-sized businesses, have the greatest capacity to create jobs, yet Africa does not have enough of them. The President of Liberia, Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf, recently suggested putting the private sector at the centre of development efforts and supplementing the Millennium Development Goals with goals for competitiveness in development. I can only endorse that welcome proposal.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development, agreed by Africa itself, was the first to affirm the close link between governance, growth and poverty reduction. Good management of public affairs is essential to bringing about an African renaissance.

Development implies essential political preconditions. There will be no development without peace, there will be no development without security, and there will be no development without the accountability of those who govern to their citizens. I would like to denounce any temptation to present transparency and respect for the rule of law as unnecessary foreign conditions imposed by donors. Democracy and respect for human rights are deep-seated aspirations of the African peoples themselves. Were they not, after all, the driving motive behind the wars for independence and the struggle against apartheid waged by the Africans themselves?

To conclude, I would like to make an appeal that is valid for all of us. Together, let us avoid repeating the errors of the past. I am thinking first and foremost of the issue of debt. Our collective efforts since the end of the 1990s have reduced the continent's external debt by a factor of four. Because Africa's debt has been thus reduced, it has recovered some room to manoeuvre in the social sectors and for public investments. In the future, let us guard against a public re-indebtedness that is too rapid and too costly. Let us not set the stage today for a new African debt crisis in 2030.

I am also thinking of the utilization and sustainable management of natural resources in Africa. Just because the terms of trade have improved does not mean that Africa should be locked into the export of raw materials alone.

Lastly, both donors and recipients of aid must increase their efforts to coordinate and harmonize their efforts. At a time when the Secretary-General is recommending that we step up recourse to budget support, why do we see new donors — who are, of course, welcome — increasing project aid? Europeans and Africans have agreed on de-linking aid. Why then should we go back on that principle with regard to donors from other continents? The same causes will repeat the same effects. Let us not repeat the errors of the past.

We are all aware of the fact that Africa is at a turning point today. Africa must be able to take full advantage of the new opportunities being presented to it. It is in our common interest that it succeed in that. I reaffirm that Europe as a whole will be at Africa's side to promote the development in Africa that is so needed by the world so that we can live in peace, prosperity and stability.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the French Republic and President of the Council of the European Union.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.

Ms. Wieczorek-Zeul (Germany): I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Assembly in my capacity as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to take place at the end of November in Doha, Qatar.

I am very moved to be able to address the Assembly, because I myself participated in the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, held in 2000, devoted to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in the Monterrey Conference, where we decided on the Millennium Development Goals and on financing for development.

We have heard this morning that the world is challenged by new situations and by events that pose a threat to human lives and development achievements. There are three major crises — food, fuel and finance — and climate change, which has an impact on all three. We also note that there is a mixed record halfway to the MDGs, especially in Africa. There is light and shade; there are achievements and disappointments. And light, to a certain extent, exists in terms of making achievements in the fight against malaria through concerted action in some African countries, which shows that progress is possible, if we join all our efforts.

But I would also like to say that, for me and I think for everyone else in this Hall and outside it, it is completely unacceptable that the risk of a woman dying because of pregnancy or childbirth is 300 times higher in Africa than in industrialized countries. That, for me, means that we have to be active in ensuring access to medical and health services and to family planning possibilities in order to save the lives of women and children.

We will be able to reach the MDGs only through an extra effort: an effort on the part of all donor countries, all development partners and the African countries themselves. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the resolution of global problems will be possible only if there is a working global partnership, with Africa as a strong player: we have heard its voice this morning.

But this high-level meeting is just one step, and the forthcoming high-level meeting on the MDGs is another. The following step will be the conference in Doha, Qatar, at the end of November, on financing for development. We will have to reinforce confidence in the partnership which we launched at Monterrey. To be successful on its path, Africa needs true partners, considerable investment and predictable funding. It is vital that the Group of Eight deliver on the pledges made in Gleneagles, namely to double aid for Africa by 2010, bringing it to $50 billion. I can say that Germany will fulfil its pledge.

The new challenges call for new ideas, new sources of financing, new forms of cooperation and new rules, specifically for financial markets. We need innovative financing instruments, as we discussed at Monterrey. One particularly promising approach, which Germany is pioneering, is to use revenues from the auctioning of carbon credits for development and adaptation processes.

Let me quote some figures that fill me and others with concern. In 2008, the least developed countries alone will have spent an extra $50 billion on oil; that is more than they get in official development assistance. And since many countries are suffering from high food and energy prices, I am advocating that countries and businesses that make profits invest a proportion of them in development. The international community should establish an agro-facility for that purpose in order to help those countries that are the hardest hit by high oil and food prices.

The current crisis in the banking system is related to the lack of transparency in financial markets. We need to prevent our development efforts from being swept away by the tide of financial markets. We need a reliable regulatory framework for the global financial markets, with binding rules on transparency.

There is also an urgent need for international action on taxation. Tax avoidance and tax flight are costing developing countries an estimated $500 billion a year in lost revenues. That is five times global official development assistance. The industrialized countries are losing another $500 billion. We therefore need to strengthen our efforts to build efficient and fair tax systems both in developing countries and in developed countries, and we need an international compact to fight tax flight and evasion.

I firmly believe that, if we boldly address these financing issues, we can achieve all the Millennium Development Goals — including in Africa. The Doha Conference in November must be a success. As the Special Envoy, I will personally be doing everything possible to ensure that it is. And I call on members please to participate at the highest possible level and to ensure that civil society participates as well. It will be a great chance, in this specific situation, to help save the world from hunger and from poverty. I think we should combine all our possibilities and all our forces to engage in this fight, the only fight that counts. We can be successful.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany for her statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yoshiro Mori, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan.

Mr. Mori (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; interpretation provided by the delegation*): In recent years, the continent of Africa has been invigorated as it experienced unprecedented economic growth and achieved increasing political stability. The result is that we now have an opportunity to achieve real and sustainable economic growth and to eradicate poverty, in order to turn a page and make the twenty-first century the century of African growth.

At the same time, Africa faces major problems and new challenges in the form of poverty, unemployment, soaring food prices, insufficient access to energy, climate change, recurring conflicts and violence and HIIV/AIDS. The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008, issued in August, predicts that it will be difficult to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa by the deadline we have set for ourselves.

In the face of these challenges, I believe it is time for the international community to come together and

enhance its support for African efforts to achieve growth and stability, to ensure human security — a concept I addressed at the Millennium Summit in 2000 (see A/55/PV.6) — and to make the most of the opportunity Africa has today to become a continent of truly vibrant nations.

As members know, Japan held the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in May of this year and the Group of Eight (G8) Hokkaido Toyako summit in July. Representatives from 51 African countries, 34 donor and Asian countries, and 77 international organizations participated in TICAD IV. I co-chaired the Conference with Prime Minister Fukuda and led discussions with African leaders on many of the issues I have just referred to. To be specific, we took up four issues and, based on the outcome of our discussion, adopted the Yokohama Declaration, which consisted of the following messages.

First, in order to strengthen the current trend of economic growth in Africa and to accelerate its growth, we will support the work that is being done to enhance infrastructure, human resources development, agriculture and trade and investment.

Secondly, we shall continue to assist African countries in the areas of community development, education, health, and water and sanitation, with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Thirdly, we shall support the efforts Africa is making to consolidate peace, which is the prerequisite of economic growth, and to promote good governance, through which the profits from growth may be allocated to the poor. Fourthly, we shall support African countries in their efforts to address environmental and climate change issues in order to promote sustainable economic growth.

As chair of the G8, Japan ensured that the discussion at the G8 Hokkaido Toyako summit in July reflected the outcome of TICAD IV. In the Hokkaido Toyako summit leaders' declaration, the G8 articulated the specific measures it would take to support the nations of Africa, focusing on the areas of health, water and sanitation, and education. For its part, Japan announced at TICAD IV the measures it would take to support Africa, including doubling its official development assistance to African countries by the year 2012 and providing support with a view to doubling private investment within the same time frame.

Allow me to say a few words about the new idea that we arrived at in TICAD IV. At the conference, a number of African countries pointed out that, although the international community had made many commitments, follow-up remained inadequate. To address that problem, we formulated the Yokohama Action Plan, which summarized the measures countries had pledged to take, and announced the establishment of the Yokohama Follow-up Mechanism, which would produce periodic reports on the progress of implementation and ensure that they were reviewed and evaluated at the ministerial level. Japan intends to take advantage of the Mechanism in the implementation of its own assistance to Africa.

This month, Japan immediately implemented one of the commitments it made at TICAD IV by dispatching joint missions to Africa with a view to promoting trade and investment between Japan and African countries. One objective is to study how Japan could provide support through its official development assistance programmes in effectively assisting the promotion of trade and investment to accelerate the growth of African nations. Japan is also determined to steadily implement the commitments it has made in the fields of health, water and sanitation, education and food with a view to realizing the MDGs.

Finally, I would like to touch on the single most important pair of concepts which I believe the international community must be guided by in the area of African development. I am referring to African ownership and to the partnership of the international community, which are linked ideas Japan has long stressed and worked to make realities.

Whether it comes from donor countries or international organizations, the assistance that development partners provide should conform to the real needs of African countries. For assistance to conform to needs, it is necessary for there to be a dialogue. At the same time, if the assistance that partners provide is to be both effective and efficient, it is clearly essential that earnest efforts be made on the African side. African countries have to muster the political will to meet such challenges as formulating sound economic, development and poverty-reduction policies, consolidating peace and achieving good governance. With the overarching goals of ownership

and partnership always in mind, Japan stands ready to work with every country and organization represented here today to make the twenty-first century truly the century of African growth.

Allow me to conclude my remarks by expressing the heartfelt hope that the discussions we have here at today's high-level meeting will be fruitful and constructive.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda and Chairman of the Group of 77, His Excellency Mr. John Ashe.

Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda): I am pleased to deliver this address on behalf of my Prime Minister, The Honourable Mr. Winston Baldwin Spencer, Chairman of the Group of 77 for 20υ8. In that capacity, I am indeed honoured and privileged to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group attaches great importance to this high-level plenary meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward".

The development needs and challenges confronting the African continent are well known, deep-seated and fundamental. The international community has focused on those needs and challenges in a number of international conferences and summits, including the Millennium Conference, the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 World Summit. There have also been a number of plurilateral and bilateral initiatives directed to Africa. Africa itself has undertaken many initiatives to further its development.

We have recognized that addressing Africa's development needs and challenges requires internal action and very significant international cooperation and facilitation in the form of resources, technology and a supporting international environment. We have committed ourselves in declarations, resolutions and plans of action to stand with Africa in the struggle to meet those needs and overcome the challenges.

The Secretary-General's comprehensive report (A/63/130) submitted for this high-level meeting and the recommendations of his MDG Africa Steering Group have made one thing abundantly clear: If fully implemented, existing international commitments could take African countries closer to achieving t Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and lay t foundation for robust economic growth throughout t continent. The focus — indeed, the mantra — of th high-level meeting should and must therefore implementation. The question we should all a ourselves is: How do we implement our commitmer to Africa?

African countries have done a great deal change the image of the continent, to mobili domestic resources, to attract private capital and enhance accountability and democratic governanc Some African countries raised domestic revenue as share of their gross domestic product by 6.9 per ce between 1996 and 2006, according to the Internatior Monetary Fund. They have committed to minimu public expenditure targets in key sectors, includi agriculture. They have shown tremendous leadership recent years and are putting in place ambitio programmes and strategies to develop and involve th private sector.

The obvious question to us is: Has t international community delivered on its commitmer More important, have we provided the committed promised assistance in the following areas: offic development assistance (ODA) to Africa — t Gleneagles promise alone was to increase ODA Africa by $25 billon per year by 2010; debt relief f all African countries that carry a heavy debt burde and an international trade environment that allows level playing field for African agricultural exports su as cotton? Have we adjusted the intellectual proper rights regime to allow the required favourable access vital technologies, as has been done for critic pharmaceuticals for HIV/AIDS?

Have we been mitigating the build-up greenhouse gasses, thereby reducing the challeng related to climate change, such as droughts and flooc or assisting the adaptation efforts by African countrie especially in agriculture? Have we re-engineered a streamlined our processes for aid delivery to ma them more supportive of institution-building a capacity-development in Africa, and to make the more effective, less costly and less demanding on t scarce policy, technical and administrative resources African States? Have we increased the flexibility a predictability of our assistance, so as to encourage a facilitate longer-term planning by African State Critically, in our assistance and support policy a

practice have we moved away from the proverbial periodic provision of a fish to Africa to aid Africa's relearning of how to fish in the large African pond?

If the answer to all or most of those questions is in the negative — and the Group of 77 suspects that that is the case — then the nature of our conclusions, the determinations of this high-level meeting and, in fact, our declaration, will be clear.

The Group of 77 and China's analysis of our draft declaration and the process leading to it suggests that we have not yet fully grasped the need for urgency, certainty and comprehensiveness in our response to Africa's development needs. We hope that by the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly there will be a strong mechanism in place to monitor our commitments, so that we can assist Africa in advancing its development and achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3208 (XXIX) of 11 October 1974, I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission.

Mr. Barroso (European Commission) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for this initiative and for his report (A/63/130). On behalf of the European Commission, I would like to welcome all the efforts that have been made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The year 2008 should not only leave us the memory of a year of fresh commitments to the developing world on the part of the international community; 2008 should also been seen as a time when we agreed to fulfil our promises more concretely and expeditiously in a new spirit of partnership.

As President Sarkozy, as President of the Council of the European Union has said so clearly, the European Union is a world actor, particularly committed to helping all developing countries. The European Union provides 60 per cent of international aid. Our relationship with Africa is unique: we are bound by history, geography, trade and our languages. By adopting the Joint Africa-European Union Strategy in Lisbon in December 2007, we opened a new chapter in our relationship. That chapter takes into account the new economic, political and social realities, but it is also intended to go beyond the traditional areas of development to include global matters, in other words the challenges of today.

May I refer very briefly to three of those major challenges: the price of food, climate change and energy security.

(*spoke in English*)

Firstly, with regard to rising food prices in the world, action is needed to support agriculture in developing countries to enable African farmers to grow more food for Africans. We have already stepped in with short-term measures worth an additional €550 million in 2008, and with a further €250 million to come in 2009. Now, the European Commission has proposed a new €1-billion food facility, promoting agricultural production by improving poor farmers' access to inputs such as fertilizers and seed. That is fully in line with Africa's own objectives for developing agriculture, and I hope the facility will soon be agreed upon within the European Union.

Secondly, climate change is hitting the poorest countries of the world hardest with severe droughts, desertification, lack of water and other natural disasters. Climate change threatens to undermine the promising African growth rates of 6 per cent and could present a major threat to peace and security. The upcoming conferences in Poznan, Poland, at the end of 2008, and in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2009 must be when we build a new international consensus.

To achieve that, it will be essential for Europe and Africa to work very closely together in the coming months to develop a strong partnership, based in particular on adaptation, the key question for Africa. It was with that in mind that the Commission launched the Global Climate Change Alliance between the European Union on the one hand, and poor and vulnerable developing countries on the other.

Another aspect of our partnership concerns the struggle against deforestation, which is a major concern in Africa. We have to prevent the illegal exploitation of rainforests and support the sustainable management of forests. A prime example of that is the forest partnership that is being established in the Congo basin.

The third area I mentioned is energy, where we must look to develop together a sustainable future. We need to establish energy security for both continents, better interconnections both between and within Africa

and Europe, and better governance and use of oil and gas revenues. Finally, we must cooperate closely to tackle the interlinked issues of poverty, deforestation and climate change. All of those issues will be addressed in the Africa-European Union Energy Partnership, launched last year.

In conclusion, let me stress one point. I am proud of the European Union's record in working together with Africa on the crucial mission of development. The Commission is doing everything in its power to help achieve the MDG targets. But, the reality is that Africa is getting onto its own two feet, building stronger rates of growth, using its rich natural resources more effectively, and strengthening good governance. When we in Europe say that we want to be partners with Africa, we will continue to bear our responsibilities, but Africa's future must ultimately lie in African hands. That requires us to work closer together to tackle global problems that recognize no frontiers, but I am confident that we will now do so in a real spirit of partnership.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX) of 11 October 1965 and decision 56/475 of 15 August 2002, I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, Chairman of the African Union Commission and former President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Ping (African Union) (*spoke in French*): Today, as the countries of the African continent come together, I should like to associate myself with the wise words of Mr. Jakaya Kikwete, current Chairman of the African Union, and will not revisit the major questions raised by him. I would also like to join all those who have spoken before me in welcoming the Secretary-General's initiative to hold this meeting.

Far from being just another meeting, today's gathering provides us with an excellent platform for mobilization and the sharing of experiences. Africa, the cradle of humankind, fully deserves the attention of the international community, especially given that it has suffered the injustice of history and continues to experience its consequences. However, our experience has enriched and matured us and bestowed upon us a priceless heritage of values. Wisdom teaches us to appreciate the added value of fruitful contact with other civilizations and international cooperation. Our rightful duty is therefore to ensure that the partnership for development serves as a defining factor in our search for peace, co-existence and a better life for all.

We should like to make the African continent a continent like all the others — free from fear and want. I need not recall here the commitments entered into in various forums throughout the years that are enshrined in numerous international instruments. Africa's development needs are well known and recognized — whether as regards combating such societal scourges as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, tuberculosis and malaria; combating poverty; or addressing the issues of food security, hunger, agricultural and industrial development, financing for development and regional and subregional integration. Once again, President Kikwete referred to all those matters. Today we all speak as one. The time has come for implementation.

Beyond all the fine words, we need a firm timetable, genuine funding commitments, a tangible partnership, innovative strategies and effective leaders in the development effort. We need to achieve. Above all, we need confidence in the African Union and its leadership on the continent, as well as in its undertakings. We also need to trust our partners, in particular the United Nations, of which we are proud to be a crucial part.

We Africans are primarily responsible for Africa's development. Carrying out the agenda for Africa is first and foremost up to us. We intend to take full responsibility for it. It is that very spirit of ownership that led African leaders to establish the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The African Union is resolutely implementing that initiative, for which it has established a funding strategy and identified specific projects. NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism reflect the continent's desire to take control of its own destiny.

Progress has been achieved, but the better part is yet to be done: the effective implementation of commitments, the transformation of decisions into action and the evaluation of achievements. The pioneering continent-wide undertaking that is NEPAD depends upon two key factors: financing and political resolve. In that regard, it is worth recalling that the 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, which was launched in November 2006, emphasizes the mobilization of resources and the coordination of efforts by United Nations agencies working in Africa. As we advocate system-wide

coherence and move towards integration, we in the African Union are also choosing to harmonize decisions and initiatives, to share skills and to rationalize needs.

We all know that political stability on the continent would facilitate the mobilization of the resources needed in our tireless fight against poverty. We all know that peace and security are necessary for sustainable development. The African Union has not hesitated to move ahead with the establishment of its peace and security structures. The African Union is steadfastly committed to peacekeeping operations on the continent. The African Union has emphasized conflict prevention in setting up its various bodies and mechanisms. We are now setting up our development structures to meet the needs and expectations of our peoples.

In all instances, the peace, security and development of Africa require stepped up international cooperation. For our part, we enthusiastically welcome the specific proposals of the Secretary-General contained in his report (A/63/130) entitled "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward", which was issued on 15 July 2008. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the joint strategy and action plan agreed with the European Union in December 2007. We also welcome, among other things, the strategic partnerships created with Japan through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process, as well as with China, India, Turkey, the countries of South America, and the United States of America through the African Growth and Opportunity Act. Lastly, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all who have provided unflagging support for us at both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

At a time when general mobilization is needed to meet new challenges such as the food crisis, the energy crisis, climate change, the digital divide and others, we need to stand together, overcome our differences and emphasize dialogue and the sharing of responsibilities, skills, successes, benefits and, above all, the satisfaction of having fulfilled our duty and nobly served our peoples.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. I would like to remind members that round tables 1 and 2 will be held in the Trusteeship Council Chamber and the Economic and Social Council Chamber, respectively, immediately following the adjournment of this plenary meeting.

Round tables 3 and 4 will take place at 3 p.m., also in the Trusteeship Council Chamber and the Economic and Social Council Chamber, respectively. Members are reminded that round tables are closed meetings and only inscribed participants will be allowed into the conference rooms.

The closing plenary meeting will begin here in the General Assembly Hall at 6.10 p.m. so that we may take action on draft resolution A/63/L.1, entitled "Political declaration on Africa's development needs".

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.4

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

4th plenary meeting
Monday, 22 September 2008, 6.10 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 6.25 p.m.

High-level plenary meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward"

Agenda item 57 (*continued*)

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Draft resolution (A/63/L.1)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/63/L.1, entitled "Political declaration on Africa's development needs". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.1?

Draft resolution A/63/L.1 was adopted (resolution 63/1).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairman of the African Union, His Excellency Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete.

President Kikwete: This has been a great day for Africa. The adoption of the political declaration is yet another strong signal of the United Nations commitment to Africa's future and of the international community's partnership with Africa.

I welcome the strong statements of support for Africa made at the opening plenary meeting, as well as the refreshing and frank discussions in the round tables on Africa's challenges, the state of implementation of various commitments and, especially, the way forward. I was also happy with the fact that there were 15 side events on topics ranging from women and development to the food crisis, energy and the challenge of governance. The side events witnessed a remarkable assembly of expertise on Africa-African and non-African alike. The outcome of those discussions certainly enriched the political declaration that we adopted here a few minutes ago.

I also welcome the press conference alongside Mr. Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank. We had a chance to engage the United Nations press corps.

It has been a successful day for Africa. There has been a lot of talk in the past about Africa's development; today, I was encouraged by the tremendous resolve to act. Let us go forth with renewed momentum so that, when we look back on this day, we can testify that we were there when history was made — indeed, when the world awoke to its moral and shared responsibility towards Africa.

Statement by the President

The President: I wish from the outset to express my gratitude to my facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Angola and the Netherlands, for

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conducting the intergovernmental consultations on the declaration we have just adopted.

We have come to the end of our day of dynamic deliberations on Africa's special development needs. Now comes the hard part: keeping the promises. Let us not repeat history by breaking them. Let us rise to the occasion and make poverty history instead.

The declaration we have just adopted, by consensus, contains an agenda for action: urgent action. Eradicating poverty, particularly in Africa is the greatest global challenge facing the world today. Our declaration says that it is a global challenge that must be addressed, by and large, by the only truly global institution: the United Nations. That is why the declaration states that a stronger Africa requires a stronger United Nations.

The declaration and our exchange today have strengthened my conviction that we have chosen the right priorities for this session of the General Assembly: Africa's priorities are the Assembly's priorities. Apart from the great global challenge of poverty, the food crisis is prominently featured, along with its potentially ruinous impact on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Also key is Africa's vulnerability to the effects of climate change and the need for new and additional resources to deal with them. Moreover, Africa's own commitments to the water and sanitation goals are highlighted in the declaration, along with the need to place women's empowerment at the heart of development policies.

The democratization of the United Nations, the key objective of the General Assembly, resonates in this document as well: we read about "the need to enhance the voice and participation of developing countries in policymaking in the areas of trade, money and finance" (*para. 19*). While this high-level meeting itself reinforces international democratization by raising the profile of the world's most representative organ — the General Assembly — we need to ensure that each single voice counts and that the Assembly can make the difference.

It is high time for the General Assembly to take back from the Group of Eight (G8) and the Bretton Woods institutions the initiative in the development debate in general and with regard to Africa in particular: no barricades, no barbed wire, no tear gas. We need to move the debate from seclusion to inclusion: that is what development is all about and that is what only this Assembly can offer.

The General Assembly is the body where the African continent constitutes the largest group and where the African voice is heard at its loudest and clearest. But we are not listening to that voice nearly enough: according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), less than half of all aid is directed towards the national priorities of developing country Governments. Many here have denounced the fall in official development assistance (ODA), including the portion allocated to agriculture, a priority of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) from the start, which stands now at only 7 per cent of overall development assistance. That, coupled with the agricultural subsidies granted by developed countries, portrays a catastrophic scenario, which must be addressed if we are to defeat the ongoing food crisis.

Railroading African Governments by ignoring NEPAD's priorities will not get the continent on track for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Rallying around African priorities instead will go a long way, and the Assembly can lead the way. That is what we have seen today.

I will not try to summarize today's rich discussion. Let me briefly highlight some common threads. There is a sense of emergency, and concrete actions must follow suit. Africa's future ultimately lies in the hands of Africans themselves: development starts at home. But it is clear that Africa's efforts must be complemented with a substantial change in international economic and trade policies. In that regard, debt relief must be tackled more aggressively so as to free the necessary funds for social investment instead of paying what has become an *ad vitam aeternam* debt. There is also a huge expectation that donor countries will ultimately abide by their pledges and fulfil their commitments to double ODA by 2010.

Home-grown political and economic reforms, including those focused on strengthening democracy and human rights and creating a healthy private sector, need to be complemented with resources from the outside: Africa lacks the resources to pull itself out of the poverty trap alone.

International aid is not just a matter of the heart. It is also a matter of the head, a matter of real and concrete political will. An African renaissance is in the

common interest. If we are to bring about that renaissance, we need to look beyond aid alone: development, security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing — they form a trinity. Hence the imperious necessity to concentrate our efforts on the social development of Africa: the sine qua non condition for peace, security and respect for all human rights.

Many participants pointed out that today's meeting is the first in a series of three this autumn. Today is about Africa, about the place on which we need to concentrate our development efforts. The second meeting, this Thursday, 25 September, is about the Millennium Development Goals and the themes that require more attention. And finally, the upcoming Financing for Development Review Conference to take place in November in Doha will be about how to muster the financial resources and the political resolve to keep our promises. We must closely monitor whether commitments are indeed being turned into concrete actions. I am pleased that the declaration sets the basis for such a monitoring mechanism.

Before I close, I want to pay tribute to President Thabo Mbeki. During his presidency of the rainbow nation, spanning nearly a decade, he, along other African leaders, championed the vision of NEPAD we still pursue today. When the affluent listen to Africa and partner with it, that vision is within reach. To quote NEPAD's founding document: "In fulfilling its promise, this agenda must give hope to the emaciated African child that the twenty-first century is indeed Africa's century" (*A/57/304, annex, para. 207*).

As was highlighted this morning, today's mantra should be "implementation": implementation of all the commitments to our African brothers and sisters. After speeches of solemnity comes the test of solidarity.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

The Assembly has thus concluded its high-level plenary meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward". The Assembly has also thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 57.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.